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Volume 6

Number 2 *The Iowa Homemaker* vol.6, no.2 and no.2  
Extra

Article 5

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1926

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### Recommended Citation

Busse Smith, Florence (1926) "The Past Decade Home Economics at I. S. C.," *The Iowa Homemaker*: Vol. 6 : No. 2 , Article 5.  
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol6/iss2/5>

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# The Past Decade in Home Economics at I. S. C.

By FLORENCE BUSSE SMITH

TEN years is not a long time—so fast it goes. History records only a few facts in a decade, but the happenings in the development of home economics at Iowa State College in that time are many. In the summer of 1915 I came to the campus for the first time to teach sophomore cookery.

Home economics was then a department in the Agricultural Division. It was made into a division of its own about this time. Often I heard Dean MacKay express great appreciation of the help and support given by Dean C. F. Curtiss to this plan. That separate entity has, no doubt, contributed much to the splendid growth of the division. When I came back to Ames again in the fall of 1919 for a permanent position there was a much increased enrollment and a correspondingly larger staff.

Tho all the days seemed busy with the multitude of things, the sum total of precious hours I spent with Dean MacKay was not small. She seemed to interpret for me the meaning of what home economics could be in the education of women. Her appreciation of the need for national effort was, no doubt, developed while she was president of the American Home Economics Association. She saw so clearly and so well, and on the foundations which she laid most carefully was begun the structure which has developed surely beyond her vision. In our course of study meetings she repeatedly emphasized her belief that the Home Economics Division should look to the service departments in the college for the teaching of the fundamental sciences and on this structure should home economics make its application. She insisted that home economics students be given as careful and exacting training in the sciences as possible. I remember her saying: "If our women are to be successful they must have as broad a cultural background as possible." This conviction influenced the list of requirements for

students. There were courses in English composition and literature, history, psychology, sociology, economics, bacteriology, chemistry, physics, modern language, etc. She had a keen appreciation of the artistic and beautiful and was eager that the students be given an understanding of the application of art principles to dress and home decoration.

A close, understanding relationship with urban and rural Iowa women was always encouraged. They came often to be our guests and answers to their requests, often meaning many extra hours of work, were most carefully given. Believing that the division should also be in search for the answers to home economics problems, Dean MacKay instituted the beginning of research in 1919.

The war period made many demands on Dean MacKay. Her sympathy and effort made her profligate with her health and for a year she sought to regain it. When she called the heads of the various departments individually to her during those hot July days before she left for her home for a rest, she gave us a solemn charge to "carry on," and seemed to seek to satisfy herself by asking us to outline in detail our plans for our departments. When word came of her sudden death in Winnipeg not long afterward, our hearts were full of tears. But we knew that the Home Economics division would continue, for, as Tennyson said,

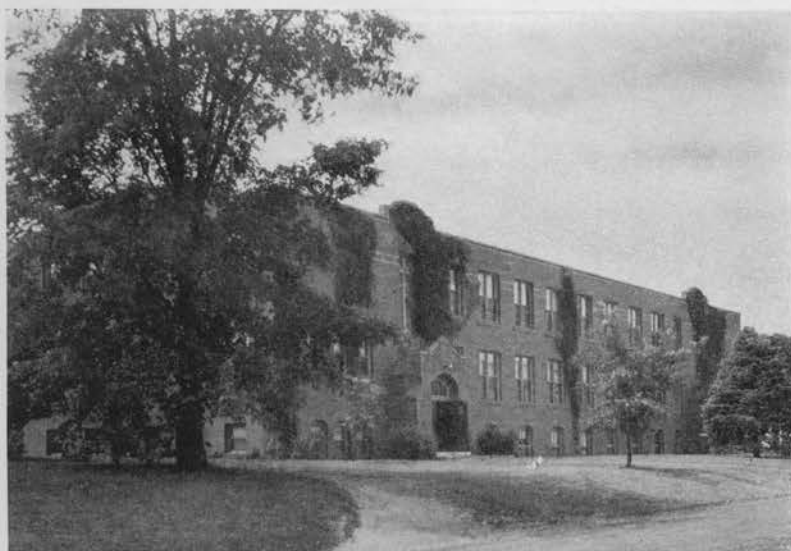
"The world was never made.  
It will change, but it will never fade."

Miss Edna Walls, who had been carrying so ably the responsibility of the division as vice dean, assumed charge until some one should be found to lead the division. The fact that the work continued to grow during this period is evidence of her loyalty and the cooperation she was able to get from her faculty. President Pearson, who was

(Continued on page sixteen)



Catherine J. MacKay



The first Home Economics Hall, now west wing of new Hall.

## HOME ECONOMICS OF TOMORROW—(Continued from page five)

(2) Positions demanding institution administration training. These cover hospital and institutional dietitians, cafeteria and lunch room managers, responsible posts in hotels, restaurants and dormitories.

(3) Technical journalists. The number of women's magazines is on the increase. Women with technical training in home economics supplemented by journalism will always find an avenue for their talents.

(4) Equipment specialists. The public utilities and manufacturers of household equipment recognize the great service which women trained to think of efficiency in terms of time, effort and money can render in their organizations.

(5) Educational work with manufacturers of food products. High class manufacturing concerns make educational service for their patrons an important part of their advertising and publicity program. This results in work for women well trained in foods, their composition, use and preparation, and many will enter business as educational directors or consultants.

(6) Clothing and art specialists. Women with training and talent find avenues for advancement in costume designing, house furnishing and various kinds of work in specialty shops.

(7) Budget specialists. There is always need for a few well trained women who understand home management and the business side of the home.

The individual types of positions in these fields increase many times the opportunities open to the woman who has training in home economics and special training to meet the needs of these occupations.

Above I stated that homemaking will always be the occupation demanding the major part of the time and interest of women. In leaving it for the last of the vocations cited, I have done so but to stress several aspects of the training for homemaking which the future will emphasize.

One of the most important of these is the recognition of the need for education which will fit men and women to assume the responsibilities of parenthood. We have made a fine beginning and the movement is rapidly gaining momentum. The future will evidence a far more comprehensive program as the result of study and research in this field, give us a deeper and finer understanding of the child, his nature and his needs, and also something of what makes for happy and successful family relations. We are looking to the homes as never before to furnish the answer to the longing in all of us for a richer, fuller, rarer spiritual and social life. An education will not be complete which does not consciously respond to higher demands.

With more widespread education for homemaking has come a keener appreciation of it is an occupation worthy of and demanding training, not one to be followed merely because one is a woman and married. This increased professional interest will demand that the home qualify according to the best standards for the occupation. In

addition to the standards already discussed is the one that the home be economically sound. To be successful it must be run in a businesslike manner. The sum total of the expenditures in connection with the home puts homemaking in the front rank of big business. The way to increase efficiency of this business is to increase the efficiency of each individual home.

As the home has ceased to be so largely a productive enterprise, more leisure has come for the homemaker. This is as it should be, provided she knows how to make effective use of this leisure. The tendency at present is to use time freed by efficient methods of house-keeping, either to enrich the social and intellectual life of the family, or in wage-earning outside of the home. Either one requires more and more efficient methods of carrying on the work of the home. Therefore, one of the important demands which the future will make upon the homemaker will be to choose wisely those tasks which she will relinquish. What are the jobs which can be done better in the home than elsewhere? Which are retained only for traditional or sentimental reasons? What are the cooperative community enterprises which will free the home from unnecessary burdens and give equally satisfactory returns? These are some of the questions which have faced homemakers in the past and will prove even more pressing in the future.

These suggestions indicate some of the lines of development for a great Home Economics Division which does have as its aim the well rounded development of the individual student and vocational efficiency in some chosen department. The departments so well represented here at Iowa State College are all working together to make their contribution to the general education of the all-round college woman. As we look into the vista of the years we see this beautiful building filled with fine, clear-eyed, upstanding women, who have learned "to apply their training to every day living," and young women who are eager also to share in the type of training which will fit them for their share in this dual responsibility of homemaking. There are class rooms where teaching based upon individual needs is being offered to interested students. There are laboratories where research is testing out theories and revealing new facts to guide us in our teaching and in our practice, and out beyond I see a state made up of more prosperous, happy homes in which there are fathers and mothers who have learned thru this college training to subordinate the material things of life to the finer duties of parenthood; who have learned to live healthy, happy, useful lives because they have mastered the mechanics of life and, therefore, have leisure to practice the arts of life and time for the richer development of personal character.

Let us dedicate ourselves and this Home Economics Hall to the ideals of fine womanhood and manhood and strive thru teaching and thru practice, with ever widening vision, more nearly to achieve our standards.

## THE PAST DECADE IN HOME ECONOMICS AT I. S. C.—(Continued from page nine)

always so generous in his appreciation of the development of home economics, talked often with the staff and was so careful in his search for the new leader. He felt the importance of "delivering not the tasks of might to weakness."

When Miss Anna E. Richardson came to us from the Federal Board for Vocational Education at Washington many new policies and plans were needing to be decided. Since then progress has been so rapid that the stories of the development would be irksome here. This progress was made only by careful thought, long, arduous effort, fortunately not without a bit of humor to those to whom were assigned the tasks. Dean Richardson taught us so well that personality itself is tremendously important, but that the division itself is far greater than any personality.

To those whose privilege it has been to work in the Home Economics Division it seems sometimes that only

the beginnings have been made and that

"If you will climb to our castle's top  
I don't see where your eye can stop."

Fortunate we are to have had leaders of vision and devotion. Vision comes to those who have ideals and ideals are developed from training and experience.

Now there comes as a culmination, as it were, of the efforts of a decade a sight of the castle ahead, a beautiful new building "quite exceeding our longings," some one has said. Perhaps in another decade this building will be far from adequate. Home economics, because of its ideals, must grow. The history of the next ten years will, doubtless, be even greater.

Socrates has said, "The best man is he who most tries to perfect himself, and the happiest man is he who most feels that he is perfecting himself." May this Home Economics Division always be a happy Home Economics Division.